

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 043739 TOSEC 040243

61

ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY EA/PRCM:OVARMSTRONG:EBS

APPROVED BY EA - RHMILLER

S/P - WLORD (DRAFT)

D - MR.INGERSOLL (DRAFT)

EA - WGLEYSTEEN (DRAFT)

S/S - CABORG PHONE

S/S-O:LRMACFARLANE

----- 099258

O 240233Z FEB 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 043739 TOSEC 040243

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (NIXON, RICHARD M.), CH, US

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM: NIXON RETURN TRAVEL
FROM PRC (S/S NO. 7603752)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM EA - ROBERT H. MILLER, ACTING

1. THE PROBLEM:

WE NEED TO DECIDE WHAT, IF ANYTHING, WE SAY TO FORMER
PRESIDENT NIXON OR THE CHINESE ABOUT USING A CHINESE PLANE
FOR THE RETURN TRIP, SCHEDULED TO LEAVE CANTON FEBRUARY 29.

ACCORDING TO A PRESS REPORT FROM PEKING, MR. NIXON WILL
LEAVE PEKING THURSDAY (PROBABLY IN THE MORNING). IF WE
WISH TO BE IN TOUCH WITH HIM ABOUT THIS PROBLEM, WE WILL
NEED TO SEND A MESSAGE TO USLO NO LATER THAN TUESDAY EVE-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 043739 TOSEC 040243

NING. THE NSC KNOWS WE ARE SENDING THIS MESSAGE, BUT SO

FAR HAS TAKEN NO POSITION ON HOW WE SHOULD HANDLE THE PROBLEM.

2. BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

THE CHINESE SUCCESSFULLY BULLDOZED OVER OUR CONCERNS AND MR. NIXON'S AND THE AIRCRAFT WAS NOT ATTACHED IN LOS

ANGELES. WE DO NOT KNOW WHY THE WOMAN WHO THREATENED AN ATTACHMENT DID NOT CARRY THROUGH. THE ATTACHMENT POSSIBILITY HAS NOW RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY AS THE RESULT OF THE FIRST FLIGHT, AND THERE IS PLENTY OF TIME FOR THE WOMAN OR SOME OTHER AMERICAN CLAIMANT TO MAKE THE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS. WHILE WE CANNOT ASSESS PRECISELY HOW SERIOUS THE RISK OF ATTACHMENT WILL BE, WE MUST ASSUME THAT THE RISK IS NOW GREATER THAN ON THE FIRST FLIGHT.

THE CHINESE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY INSIST AGAIN ON FLYING MR. NIXON BACK TO LOS ANGELES. AS ON THE FIRST FLIGHT, THEY MAY REJECT ANY REQUEST BY MR. NIXON TO FLY, FOR EXAMPLE, FROM TOKYO TO THE US BY COMMERCIAL AIRLINER.

SINCE MR. NIXON WOULD BE DISEMBARKING RATHER THAN EMBARKING, AN ATTACHMENT ON THE RETURN FLIGHT WOULD BE LESS OF A PROBLEM THAN ON THE FIRST FLIGHT. AN ATTACHMENT, HOWEVER, WOULD BE A SERIOUS IRRITANT IN US-PRC RELATIONS. THE CHINESE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY TRY AGAIN TO TAKE THE POSITION THAT THE CREW WOULD DEPART AND LEAVE THE PLANE IN OUR HANDS, INCLUDING RESPONSIBILITY FOR RETURNING THE PLANE TO THE PRC. ASIDE FROM THE QUESTION OF WHAT FUNDS WE COULD USE, WE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE CRITICIZED IF WE PAID THE COSTS FOR RETURNING THE PLANE TO THE PRC, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE MEDIA HAS BEEN UNIFORMLY CRITICAL OF MR. NIXON'S TRIP. (A ROUGH COST ESTIMATE, BASED IN PART ON AIR FORCE ESTIMATED COSTS PER FLYING HOUR, PLUS AIR FARE FOR THE CREW'S RETURN FLIGHT, WOULD BE \$50,000.)

3. THE OPTIONS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 043739 TOSEC 040243

THEORETICALLY, WE COULD DO NOTHING, HOPE FOR THE BEST, AND SORT OUT THE PROBLEMS ARISING FROM AN ATTACHMENT IF IT OCCURS. HOWEVER, WE THINK WE SHOULD FLAG THE PROBLEM TO MR. NIXON AND LET HIM DECIDE IF HE WISHES TO RAISE IT WITH THE CHINESE. DOING NOTHING MIGHT ALSO LEAD THE CHINESE TO CONCLUDE THAT WE DID NOT MEAN WHAT WE SAID ABOUT THE ATTACHMENT RISK, OR THAT DESPITE OUR STATE-

MENT THAT WE CANNOT PREVENT THE INITIAL ATTACHMENT, WE DID IN FACT DO EXACTLY THAT. IT ALSO WOULD BE UNHELPFUL TO LEAVE UNCHALLENGED PRCLO'S STATEMENT THAT IF THE PLANE WERE ATTACHED, WE WOULD HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RETURNING IT TO THE PRC.

THEORETICALLY, WE COULD ALSO CANCEL FLIGHT CLEARANCE FOR THE SECOND FLIGHT. THIS WOULD CREATE SUCH A MAJOR PROBLEM IN US-PRC RELATIONS, INCLUDING LATER RETALIATION IN KIND BY THE PRC, THAT WE DO NOT CONSIDER IT A REALISTIC OPTION.

WE BELIEVE THE ONLY REALISTIC OPTION IS TO RAISE THE MATTER WITH MR. NIXON AND SEE HOW HE AND THE CHINESE DECIDE TO HANDLE IT. THE PREFERRED OUTCOME WOULD BE FOR MR. NIXON TO ENTER THE US ON A COMMERCIAL FLIGHT. HOWEVER, IF MR. NIXON PREFERS NOT TO RAISE THE MATTER WITH THE CHINESE, OR IF THE CHINESE, AS IS LIKELY, AGAIN REJECT HIS OFFER TO FLY COMMERCIALY, WE WOULD LET THE PLANE COME AND MAKE CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS FOR FREEING THE AIRCRAFT IF IT IS ATTACHED. IN THAT CASE, WE WOULD HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER WE SHOULD INFORM THE CHINESE THAT WE CANNOT ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR RETURNING THE PLANE TO THE PRC.

THE MESSAGE TO MR. NIXON COULD BE AS FOLLOWS. WE BELIEVE IT SHOULD BE IN YOUR NAME (OR POSSIBLY BRENT SCOWCROFT'S).

BEGIN TEXT:

IT WAS FORTUNATE THAT YOUR DEPARTURE FROM LOS ANGELES WENT OFF SMOOTHLY, BECAUSE AN ATTACHMENT OF THE AIR-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 043739 TOSEC 040243

CRAFT WOULD HAVE CREATED MAJOR PROBLEMS FOR ALL CONCERNED. WE APPRECIATED YOUR COOPERATION IN TELLING THE CHINESE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BOARD THE AIRCRAFT IN TOKYO, EVEN THOUGH THE CHINESE REJECTED THAT PROPOSAL.

WE DO NOT KNOW WHY THE PERSON WHO THREATENED THE ATTACHMENT DID NOT CARRY THROUGH. HOWEVER, THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ATTACHMENT RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY, AND WE HAVE TO ASSUME THAT THE RISK WILL BE GREATER ON THE RETURN FLIGHT.

I THOUGHT I SHOULD CALL THIS TO YOUR ATTENTION, AND WILL APPRECIATE YOUR LETTING ME KNOW YOUR REACTION. IF YOU AND YOUR CHINESE HOSTS DECIDE THAT THE PLANE SHOULD

RETURN TO LOS ANGELES, WE WILL MAKE ALL THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR FREEING THE AIRCRAFT IF IT IS ATTACHED.

(OPTIONAL) YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT SHORTLY BEFORE THE CHINESE PLANE LANDED IN LOS ANGELES, THE CHINESE LIAISON OFFICE INFORMED US THAT IF ANYTHING DELAYED THE PLANE'S DEPARTURE, THE CHINESE CREW WOULD LEAVE AND THE US GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RETURNING THE PLANE TO CHINA. I AM SURE YOU WILL APPRECIATE THAT WE WOULD BE VULNERABLE TO CRITICISM IF WE DID IN FACT PAY THE COSTS OF RETURNING THE PLANE TO CHINA. (END OPTIONAL).

I REGRET THE NECESSITY OF RAISING THIS MATTER WITH YOU, BUT I WANTED YOU TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF LETTING US KNOW YOUR VIEWS.

I WISH YOU A PLEASANT AND PRODUCTIVE VISIT IN CHINA.

END TEXT.

5. RECOMMENDATION:

THAT, SUBJECT TO NSC CONCURRENCE, YOU AUTHORIZE US TO SEND THE ABOVE MESSAGE TO MR. NIXON THROUGH USLO.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 043739 TOSEC 040243

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

THAT YOU DECIDE WHETHER THE OPTIONAL PARAGRAPH BE INCLUDED.

INCLUDE OMIT

THAT YOU INDICATE PREFERENCE WHETHER MESSAGE SHOULD GO IN YOUR NAME OR SCOWCROFT'S.

YOURS SCOWCROFT'S

6. CLEARANCES: S/P - MR. LORD AND D - MR. INGERSOLL.
INGERSOLL

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, AIR TRANSPORTATION, AIRCRAFT, BRIEFING MATERIALS, DEBTS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE043739
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: OVARMSTRONG:EBS
Enclosure: TOSEC 40243
Executive Order: OA
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P840099-1108
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760218/aaaaapmk.tel
Line Count: 216
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <20 SEP 2004 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ACTION MEMORANDUM: NIXON RETURN TRAVEL
TAGS: OVIP, OGEN, CH, US, (NIXON, RICHARD M)
To: USDEL SECRETARY SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006